

REMARKS

1. *Status of claims*

After entry of the above amendment, claims 1-3, 5-16, 18-26, 28-32, and 34-41 are pending.

2. *Support for amendment*

The above amendment incorporates limitations of dependent claims into their base claims and corrects dependency of various dependent claims in light thereof. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

3. *Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103*

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-16, 23-26, and 28-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Swisher *et al.*, US 2003/0004267 ("Swisher"). In light of the above amendment, Applicants submit the basis for this rejection has been removed. Specifically, Swisher does not teach compositions comprising, among other components, about 0.1 parts by weight to about 20 parts by weight of a monovinylarene-conjugated diene rubber. Therefore, Applicants request this rejection of claims 1-3, 5-16, 23-26, and 28-41 be withdrawn.

4. *Claim objections*

The Examiner objected to claims 17-22 and 42 as being dependent on rejected base claims, but allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the above amendment, the limitations

of claim 17 have been incorporated into all independent claims (claims 1, 23, 25, 37, and 41).
Claims 17, 33, and 42 have been canceled as being redundant.

5. *Final remarks*

Applicants submit the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned patent agent at (713) 934-4065 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON, P.C.
CUSTOMER NO. 37774

December 15, 2005



Raymund B. Eich, Ph.D.
Reg. No. 42,508
10333 Richmond, Suite 1100
Houston, Texas 77042
(713) 934-4065
(713) 934-7011 (fax)

AGENT FOR APPLICANTS